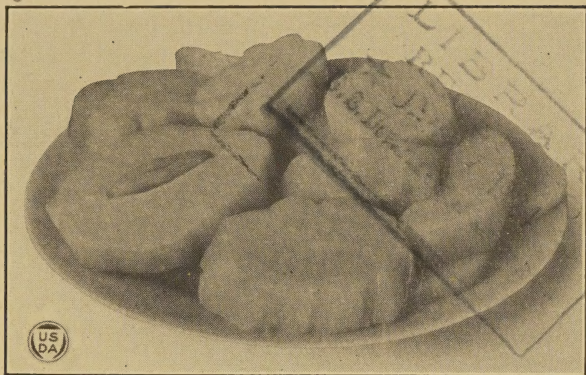


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*Chayotes sliced crosswise and pared, ready for cooking.  
They are especially good buttered, creamed, and in salads.*

## The Chayote

### A VALUABLE NEW SOUTHERN VEGETABLE

Among the fall and winter vegetables that can be easily grown in home gardens of the South, the chayote (pronounced chī-o'tī), a native of tropical America, has proved one of the best. It is produced by a climbing vine with perennial roots. The vine somewhat resembles that of the cucumber, to which family it belongs, but it is much more vigorous in growth and more prolific. The chayote can be grown successfully on any of the well-drained cultivated lands in those sections of the Southern States where the ground does not usually freeze, anywhere south of a line drawn from Charleston, S. C., to Baton Rouge, La., and along the Gulf coast of Texas. It has fruited at a number of points north of this. It is also grown successfully in southern California.

## USES.

The chayote is a pear-shaped vegetable containing a single large edible seed. The flavor of the flesh is not unlike that of the vegetable marrow or of the summer squash, but is more delicate. For immediate cooking use the fruits are best if picked when scarcely full grown, and they may then often be used without paring. When they are to be shipped or stored, chayotes keep better if permitted to reach full size. If they are not bruised in picking or handling and are wrapped in tissue paper, packed in excelsior, and kept in a cool place—45° to 55° F.—they will often keep for as long as four or five months.

Chayotes when picked and used at the proper stage are tender, yet firm enough to hold the form in which they are cooked. They may be used boiled, creamed, in salads, baked, stuffed, fried, in soups or stews, or pickled. For pickles they usually are cooked for a few minutes. The seed is commonly cooked with the rest of the vegetable; it has a nutlike flavor and is very nutritious. The distinctiveness of the chayote is largely in its excellent texture, and serving usually without mashing is recommended. For the preparation of most dishes the fruits are best sliced about three-quarters of an inch thick, crosswise through the seed, pared, and boiled until tender (15 to 20 minutes) in just enough salted water to cook them. The addition of a little sugar in boiling is liked by many persons. A few of the many recipes are briefly given here.



## RECIPES.

**BUTTERED.**—Slice and boil the chayotes as described, and drain; place in a serving dish, with butter on the top slices so it will melt over the lower ones, and serve hot. The vegetable is particularly attractive and pleasing to the taste when served by this simple method.

**CREAMED.**—Dice the sliced boiled chayotes and serve with a cream, butter, or tomato sauce.

**FRIED.**—Sliced and boiled chayotes may be fried either plain or dipped in bread or cracker crumbs or in beaten egg. Raw chayotes are excellent when sliced and fried slowly in the same manner.

**SALADS.**—Because of its delicate texture and mild flavor the chayote is especially desirable for use in salads. Prepare as for creamed chayotes, cool, and serve on lettuce leaves with mayonnaise or French dressing; the boiled and diced chayotes also may be served in a mixed salad with tomatoes, celery, or other vegetables.

**BAKED WITH CHEESE.**—Place sliced chayotes in a saucepan with a piece of salt pork and cook until tender in just enough water to cook them. Season with paprika and salt. When tender, remove slices with a skimmer and place in baking dish. Prepare a white sauce, using the water in which the chayotes were cooked and some milk, and pour over the chayotes. Cover with grated cheese and bread crumbs, add bits of butter, and bake to a golden brown.

**FRITTERS.**—(1) Boil the sliced chayotes until tender and rub through a colander. For three cups of chayote pulp use 1 egg, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 teaspoon of baking powder, 2 tablespoons of sweet milk, and sufficient flour to make a fritter batter. Fry like ordinary griddle-cakes, or drop by tablespoonfuls into deep hot fat and cook until browned. Serve hot, with or without sirup. (2) Slice and pare the chayotes; boil until tender; dip in any preferred fritter batter and fry.

## CULTURE.

Spring planting of chayotes is best, except in southern Florida, where the winter frosts, if they occur, are usually light. There, planting may be done in the autumn, if desired, and protection by mulching may be given in frosty or freezing weather.

When planting, place the entire fruit on its side, with the broad end slanting slightly downward; cover the lower end with not more than 2 inches of soil, leaving the small, or stem end, exposed. The fruits should be planted, one in a hill, 15 to 20 feet apart. They grow best in a rich well-drained sandy loam, but will grow well in



any good garden soil if drainage is provided and a liberal amount of well-rotted manure, compost, or a standard vegetable fertilizer is mixed with the soil in each hill. Barnyard manure is the best fertilizer. In light sandy soils chayotes usually burn out during the dry weather of spring or early summer.

The plants should be mulched with straw or litter and watered at least once a week during dry periods, especially in the spring. The vines should be trained on some sort of trellis. Even a fence, an outbuilding, or a tree (if not making too dense a shade) will furnish satisfactory support for them.

Chayotes fruit best at moderate temperatures. In the Southern States favorable weather for fruiting usually begins late in September and continues until the vines are killed by frost. A liberal dressing of barnyard manure applied in the early spring to plants kept over winter will sometimes result in a crop of chayotes in April and May.

Persons who raise more chayotes than they can use or dispose of locally are requested to communicate promptly with the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. The Department often is able to direct growers to a market.

**FUNGIOUS DISEASES AND INSECT PESTS.**—The most troublesome diseases and insect pests of the chayote are the same as those which attack other cucurbits, and the same methods of control are effective. A nicotine spray may be used for the melon and pickle worms and for aphids, and arsenate of lead for leaf-eating insects such as the cucumber beetles and the squash ladybird.

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For further information concerning the chayote, see U. S. Department of Agriculture Circular No. 286 or address

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY**

**OFFICE OF FOREIGN SEED AND PLANT INTRODUCTION**

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